Mihrdat V

(r. 435 - 447)

BRIEFING

Mihrdat V (Georgian: მირდატ V, Latinized as *Mithridates*), of the Chosroid Dynasty, was the king (*mepe*) of Iberia (Kartli, eastern Georgia) reigning, according to a medieval Georgian literary tradition, for 12 years, from c. 435 to 447 (according to Cyril Toumanoff).

Mihrdat was the son and successor of King Archil. The Georgian annals praise Mihrdat for his piety, but provide no details about his reign. He was married to Sagdukht, daughter of Barzabod, Mihranid prince of Gardman, and fathered Vakhtang, his successor.

BIOGRAPHY

The main source on the life of Mirdat V is the medieval Georgian chronicle collection "Kartlis Tskhovreba". According to Juansher Juansheriani's "Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali", which is part of this collection, Mirdat V was the only son of King Archil and his Greek wife Maria. Even during his father's lifetime, he became famous as a brave and skilled military leader, who successfully fought against Sassanid Iran, which wanted to achieve complete subordination of Iberia to the authority of its rulers. The lands of Arran, under the jurisdiction of Shah Yazdegerd I's viceroy in Transcaucasia, Marzban Barzabod, suffered particularly severely from the attacks of the Iberians. Since at this time the Shah's troops were waging bloody wars in other border regions of Iran, the Persians were unable to put up strong resistance to the attacks of Archil and Mirdat, limiting themselves to defending only their cities and fortresses. Medieval chronicles describe the end of this war in different ways. Some claim that the enraged Yazdegerd I executed all the Christian bishops and Iberian and Armenian nobles held hostage, that he plundered Iberia again, that only King Archil's mother, Anusha, was able to tearfully implore the Shah to stop the bloodshed, and that peace only came after the death of this Sassanid ruler, who died in 421. Others report that only Mirdat's love for the beautiful Sagdukht, Barzabod's daughter, and his marriage to her, brought an end to the war, as a result of which the Iberians were able to defend their right to practice Christianity. Modern historians, however, suggest that these events may have occurred concurrently with the Iranian-Byzantine War of 421-422, one of the theaters of which was the Transcaucasian lands. Despite the information contained in the Georgian chronicles that the outcome of the war was favorable for King Archil, other historical sources contain information that at this time the kings of Sasanian Iran increased the tribute from all three Caucasian kingdoms (Iberia, Greater Armenia and Caucasian Albania), and also imposed on them an annual military service to replenish the Shah's troops.

Georgian chronicles report that after marrying Mirdat, the pagan Sagdukht was baptized and remained a devout Christian for the rest of her life. As a wedding gift, King Archil gave Mirdat Samshvilde to rule, where, by order of Sagdukht, a cathedral was subsequently erected, known as the Samshvilde Sioni.

After Archil's death in 435, Mirdat V inherited the throne of Iberia. Very little is known about his reign. Although the Life of Vakhtang Gorgasali reports that Iberia was not at war during this time and its inhabitants enjoyed peace and quiet, the Conversion of Georgia contains evidence that Marzban Barzabod appointed Archbishop Glonokor of Mtskheta as " Eristavi of Kartli and Hereti ." This Glonokor is believed to be identical to Archbishop Mobidan, the head of the Iberian Nestorians, mentioned in other sources . Modern historians view this event as an attempt by the authorities of Sasanian Iran to establish direct ties with the clergy and nobility of Iberia in order to weaken the institution of royal power in that state.

Chronicles describe Mirdat V as a just and humane ruler. The royal couple's children were a son, Vakhtang I Gorgasal , and two daughters, Huaranzan and Mirandukht, who, according to the customs of the time, were given away at an early age to noble Iberian families for upbringing.

Mirdat V died in 447 after 12 years of reign. His minor son Vakhtang became the new king of Iberia.